

The physicians in Los Angeles are very busily at work in preparation for the meeting of the American Medical Association which is to be held in that city during the last week of June, 1911. From present indications the meeting will be in every way a very successful one though, of course, the attendance will not be so large as it would be in Chicago or Atlantic City. There is a curiously strong prejudice inherent in the mind of the easterner, against travel. A New Yorker seems to regard a trip to Chicago as close to an upheaval of nature, and he talks about "going out West" if he moves as far from Manhattan as St. Louis or Minneapolis! But in spite of that fact, a good many of them are coming to Los Angeles.

The committee on scientific program for the state meeting at Santa Barbara is arranging a program which it trusts will meet with the cordial approval and support of the profession of the entire state. It has seemed to the committee that a fewer number of papers and more time allowed for the discussion of them and for recreation, would appeal to all. With forty or forty-five papers the session could be made of the very best scientific value and much fatigue which results from a crowded program be avoided. Symposiums on surgery, medicine, obstetrics and neurology will be features of the program together with sections on Eye and Ear and Nose and Throat and on Genito-Urinary and skin diseases. There will, of course, be room for miscellaneous papers. The committee hopes to interest members outside the cities in a liberal contribution to the session's work.

ATROPHY OF TONGUE AND SYPHILIS.

The recent paper of Symmers' (*Amer. Jour. Med. Sciences*, Dec., 1910) on The Incidence and Significance of Smooth Atrophy of the Base of the Tongue has again directed attention to the observation made by Virchow many years ago that syphilis is often associated with lesions at the root of the tongue characterized by obliteration of the normal surface markings and by unusual smoothness and induration of the tissues in that vicinity. While the occurrence of these changes has been frequently alluded to, it remains a fact that no important and systematic investigation of the subject was undertaken until 1894, when Lewin and Heller published the results of their observations which confirmed the belief of Virchow that a causal relation existed between smooth atrophy of the base of the tongue and syphilis.

These investigators in studying 103 subjects with the lesions described found that 69% had anatomical evidences of syphilis. The majority (62%) were over forty years of age and the lesion was noted more frequently in women than in men. They could trace no relationship between hereditary syphilis and the lingual atrophy. In fact they advanced the view that the atrophy was the result

of an interstitial fibrosis following ulcerating gummata, and that therefore the lesion is practically always a late sequence of acquired syphilis. Lesser studied 166 cases but found gross evidences of lues in 44% only, and disagrees with Lewin and Heller with regard to the relation of the lesion to ulcerating gummata, believing that the indurative process is the result of a chronic interstitial inflammation involving to a greater or less extent all of the tissues at the base of the tongue. On the other hand, Skladney states that he noted the lingual lesion in 20 out of 24 cases of late hereditary syphilis, an experience which is quite contrary to that of Seifert, who was unable to determine any lesion of the character under discussion in any of 26 cases of late hereditary syphilis which he studied.

In this country Potter, with the exception of Symmers, appears to have been the only one to attempt to determine the clinical value of smooth atrophy of the tongue. He examined the tongue in nearly 400 individuals and arrived at the conclusion that when the root of the tongue is normal it is probably of considerable value in excluding syphilis. Symmers in looking over 75 cases of undoubted late syphilis found the lingual lesion in 85%. From his observations upon the subject he draws the conclusion that genuine indurative atrophy of the base of the tongue is invariably the result of syphilis; but he does not find any histological evidence to support the view of Lewin and Heller that the condition has its origin in broken-down gummata, in this respect agreeing with Lesser.

THE GASTRO-INTESTINAL TRACT AS AN ORGAN OF EXCRETION.

The role of the wall of the gastro-intestinal tract in the excretion of foreign substances from the blood has long been surmised, but it is only within the last few years that the subject has been investigated to any extent. The results of these investigations have been most interesting and appear to justify further experimental studies. One of the earliest proofs of the passage of alien substances from the systemic blood into the gastro-intestinal tract consisted in the injection of antimony subcutaneously and demonstrating its presence a short time later in the stomach. Morphin, atropin, strychnin, and snake-venom have also been known to find their way into the stomach or intestine. More recently Mendel has shown that strontium is excreted by the intestine, and Good, Harnack, and Steinfeld have demonstrated the same thing for lithium, manganese and bismuth.

To what extent micro-organisms are excreted by the walls of the gastro-intestinal tract has been less satisfactorily shown. Years ago Emmerich stated that the organism of cholera could be recovered from the intestine several hours after subcutaneous or intravenous injection, and he expressed the view